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Cuyahoga Valley National Park Selected As 2012 National Park Foundation America's Best Idea Grant Recipient

Joins 48 Parks across the Country to Participate in Foundation's 2012 Program

Brecksville, Ohio – Tuesday, June 26, 2012 – Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) has been selected as one of 49 national parks participating in the 2012 America's Best Idea program sponsored by the National Park Foundation, the official charity of America's national parks. Inspired by the critically-acclaimed Ken Burns documentary *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*, the America's Best Idea grant program funds park projects designed to connect diverse, under-engaged populations throughout the United States with their national parks in innovative and meaningful ways.

"We are proud to provide the much needed support to create unique opportunities for all Americans to personally connect with their national parks," said Neil Mulholland, President and CEO of the National Park Foundation. "The America's Best Idea grants are often the catalyst for extraordinary experiences that develop into lifelong relationships with our national parks for the program participants."

"The National Park Foundation funding will allow us to implement an innovative program that meets education goals while also introducing Cuyahoga Valley National Park to a new audience," said Stan Austin, park superintendent. "Our project is a collaborative effort with the park's friends group, the Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park, and Akron Public Schools. Through this project, we will be able to model a program that shows how parks can play a role in summer learning."

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Cuyahoga Valley National Park received this award for the *Environmental Education Academy for Akron Public School Students*. This innovative program, now in its second year, will serve up to 100 at-risk children entering ninth grade at four Akron Public School high schools.

The students will come to the park for an immersive experience that enhances math, science, and literacy skills, as well as builds confidence to make the transition to high school and successfully complete ninth grade. The program includes a two-week summer session (June 18 - 22 and June 25 - 29, 2012) and three return trips to the park during the 2012 - 2013 school year for additional activities. Students who successfully complete the program will earn .5 academic credit for their high school transcripts and up to 10 students will be hired as Junior Counselors for the 2013 summer program. The *Environmental Education Academy for Akron Public School Students* will also introduce CVNP to this group of youth who may never have experienced a national park.

For a full listing of participating parks and program descriptions, visit the National Park Foundation website www.nationalparks.org/our-work/programs/americas-best-idea.

The National Park Foundation and CVNP wish to thank L.L. Bean, DISNEY, the Anschutz Foundation, and the Ahmanson Foundation for their generous support of the America's Best Idea program.

For more information on the National Park Foundation or how you can support and protect America's national parks, visit www.nationalparks.org.

For more information about CVNP visit www.nps.gov/cuva. For more information about the Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park visit www.conservancyforcvnp.org.

About the National Park Foundation. You are the owner of 84 million acres of the world's most treasured memorials, landscapes, ecosystems, and historic sites -- all protected in America's nearly 400 national parks. Chartered by Congress, the National Park Foundation is the official charity of America's national parks. We work hand in hand with the National Park Service to connect you and all Americans to the parks, and to make sure that they are preserved for the generations who will follow. Join us in supporting your national parks -- this is your land. www.nationalparks.org

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